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ABSTRACT

This instructional unit was built upon the idea that most of the children from a second and a sixth grade classroom already had some knowledge about the social history of their community in Loveland, Colorado. The teachers implementing the unit helped these students make connections between the past and present and thereby develop an understanding of time and chronological relationship in Loveland history. Research for the unit began by having the second and the sixth grade class complete a chart that helped students verbalize what they believed life was like "long ago," "close to now," and "now." The chart addresses the social history of Loveland and includes transportation, communication, and social relations. Students were read historical books about Loveland and, working with primary sources including photography, were encouraged to make connections in their drawings and writings as they examined artifacts, took a walking tour of the area, and participated in a community day with guest speakers. As a culminating activity, students built three model communities of Loveland (long ago, close to now, and now) and discussed the models in small groups. This document describes the unit, contains an example of the social history chart, and provides instructions for the 10-lesson unit. (BT)

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When you were born...Connecting the past and present by building a model community

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Instructional Unit Description

Title of Unit: When you were born...Connecting the past and present by building a model community

Research indicates that children have significant knowledge of social history, suggesting that "the most accessible knowledge for younger children related to material culture and the patterns of everyday life" (Barton & Levstik, 1996, p. 442). As teachers, we often begin a history unit by introducing the political history instead of showing students the social relationships evident in the patterns of everyday life. Our unit was built upon the idea that most of the children from a second and sixth grade classroom already had some knowledge about the social history of their community in Loveland, Colorado. The second and sixth grade teachers and I sought to help these students make connections between the past and present, and thereby develop an understanding of time and chronological relationship in Loveland history.

The research began by having the second and sixth grade class complete a graphic organizer that helped students to verbalize what they believed life was like "long ago", "close to now", and "now". The graphic organizer was based on the social history of Loveland and included transportation, communication, social relations, and other aspects of interest to students. Several historical fiction books were read to the students about the history of Loveland, and the state of Colorado. Students wrote stories about a typical day for a child in Loveland "long ago", "close to now", and "now". Students worked with primary source materials; photographs of everyday life that depicted various modes of transportation, communication, and social relations. Students were encouraged to make connections in their drawing and writings as they examined artifacts to clarify their understanding of Loveland history. The class visited the historical sties in Loveland by taking a walking tour of the area and gained information that will be used on a classroom tour day. A community day was held with guest speakers from the Philanthropic Club of Loveland. These guest speakers shared with the second and sixth grade students the significant events in the history of Loveland over the past 100 years.

The final activity for the students was to build three model communities of Loveland. The classes built Loveland "long ago" (1930s "when their grandparents were born"), Loveland "close to now" (1950s

"when their parents were born"), and Loveland "now" (1990s "when the students were born"). The culminating activity was a "tour day" where each of the three model communities were placed in the classroom and working together in small groups students shared the information they found the most interesting regarding the historical setting of their model communities. Students explained what they learned from this experience in relationship to the Colorado content standards. As a closure for the unit the class completed the graphic organizer again and shared what they had learned about Loveland history, correcting any misconceptions they may have had at the beginning of the unit.

Dr. Lynne Michel Blackburn, University of Northern Colorado, November, 1999

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

	Transportation	Communication	Social Relations "How people treated one another"	Other Aspects
"Long Ago"				
"Close to Now"				
"Now"				

Pre and post test data were collected from children using the graphic organizer.

Dr. Lynne Michel Blackburn, University of Northern Colorado, November, 1999

Data from Students	Processes by Students	Products & Performances from Students
Primary Source Materials	The students examined and organized photographs that depicted everyday life, participated in discussions about the primary source materials based on transportation, communication, social relations and other aspects they found interesting	Information from the primary source materials were used by students as they built their model communities, facilitated "Tour Day", and created writings with drawings about Loveland history.
Graphic Organizers	As a whole class the students completed a graphic organizer at the beginning and end of this unit. The graphic organizer helped students to verbalize what they believed life was like "long ago", "close to now", and "now" based on transportation, communication, social relations, and other aspects of interest to them.	Graphic Organizer activities were collected, recorded, and transcribed
Readings, Writings & Drawings	Several historical fiction books were read to the students about the history of Loveland, and the state of Colorado. Students wrote stories about a typical day for a child in Loveland "long ago", "close to now", and "now".	Stories and drawings were shared, recorded, and collected

Data from Students	Processes by Students	Products & Performances from Students
Walking Tour of Loveland	Students participated in a walking tour of Loveland and visited the historical sites they were studying.	Information from the walking tour of Loveland was used by students as they built their model communities, facilitated "Tour Day", and created writings with drawings about Loveland history.
Community Day	Members of the Loveland Philanthropic Club shared with students significant events in Loveland history. Students listened to stories, asked questions, and carried on conversations with the Philanthropic Club members.	Information from the community day was used by students as they built their model communities, facilitated "Tour Day", and created writing and drawings about Loveland history.
"Tour Day"	In cooperative small groups students shared the information they knew about each of the model communities and answered questions during a tour of each model community.	Tours were recorded and transcribed.

Lesson One
Graphic Organizer & Primary Source Pictures
Engage: Students in each grade level will complete the graphic organizer as a class.
Explore: In small groups students will be given several primary source photographs of Loveland "long ago", "close to now", and "now". Students will groups these photographs in chronological order. Each small group will explain to the class why they decided to place each photograph in a particular order.
Explain: The teacher will share the correct chronological order of all the photographs and the class will discuss the modes of transportation, communication, social relations, and other aspects they found important in the photographs.
Evaluate: Graphic organizers and discussions will be collected, recorded, and transcribed.

Lesson Two
Walking Tour of Loveland
Engage: The second and sixth grade students will meet for the first time and ride a bus together to downtown Loveland.
Explore: Students will take a walking tour of 4th Street viewing buildings such as the train depot, post office, bank, Rialto theater, and old school house. The bus will take the students to Lake Loveland, the water plant, and the sugar beet factory.
Explain: Throughout the tour the teachers will share information about the various sites.
Evaluate: Students will use information from the walking tour of Loveland to build their model communities, facilitate a "Tour Day", and create writing and drawings about Loveland history.

Lesson Three, & Four
Readings, Writings, and Drawings
Engage: Students will read individually and as a class several historical fiction books on the history of Loveland, and the state of Colorado.
Explore: Students will gather information from primary source materials, Loveland walking tour, internet, and the library. Students will write stories and/or draw pictures about a typical day for a child in Loveland "long ago", "close to now", and "now".
Explain: Students in second grade and sixth grade will be given the opportunity to e-mail one another regarding the information they are learning about Loveland history.
Evaluate: Stories and drawings will be shared, recorded, and collected.

Dr. Lynne Michel Blackburn, University of Northern Colorado, November, 1999

Lesson Five
Community Day
Engage: Second grade students will go to the Middle School for Community Day.
Explore: Several members of the Loveland Philanthropic Club will talk to the students about Loveland over the past 100 years.
Explain: The Philanthropic Club members will share their primary source materials, such as books that they read when they were young, newspaper articles, photographs. The guest speakers will share several stories about the significant historical events in Loveland, and how Loveland has changed over the past 100 years will be shared.
Evaluate: Students will use information from the walking tour of Loveland to build their model communities, facilitate "Tour Day", and create writing and drawings about Loveland history.

Lesson Six, Seven, & Eight
Building Communities
Engage: Students will be asked to bring in recyclable materials to use in the model communities. The second grade class will build one building in Loveland as it looked "long ago", "close to now", and "now". In small groups, the sixth grade students will build eight buildings in Loveland as they looked "long ago", "close to now", and "now".
Explain: Students will have a mini-lesson on scale, direction, and recyclable materials.
Explore: Students will collaborate, plan, research, construct a building, and write a tour speech for the Loveland model communities from "long ago", "close to now", and "now".
Evaluate: Loveland model communities and "Tour Day".

Lesson Nine
"Tour Day"
Engage: The sixth and second grade classes will come together at the elementary school and arrange their model communities.
Explain: A tour of the constructed model communities of Loveland will be facilitated by the students. At this time students will have the opportunity to share their reflections and things they have learned from this project.
Explore: Several community members, school district employees, students, and Loveland Philanthropic members will be invited to take the tour of the model communities of Loveland.
Evaluate: Model communities and tours of Loveland "long ago", "close to now", and "now".

Lesson Ten

Closure

Engage: Students in each grade level will complete the graphic organizer as a class.

Explain: The class will compare and contrast the first graphic organizer with the one they just completed. Any further information about the project and Loveland history will be shared at this time.

Explore: Students will make comparisons between the information they have learned and the information they had before they began the unit.

Evaluate: Graphic organizer activities were collected, recorded, and transcribed.

Resources:

Levstik, L. & Barton, K. (1997). Doing history: Investigating with children in elementary and middle schools. New Jersey: Erlbaum Publishers.Young, Katherine A. (1994). Constructing Building, Bridges & Minds.
New Hampshire: Heinemann.